

SOLUTIONS – Tactical Vignette 98-3:

“Attack in Brandenburg” from the May-June 1998 issue of ARMOR

THE PROBLEM:

Situation.

Enemy. Remnants of an enemy force are defending the town of Brandenburg to prevent the seizure of the ferry site. Enemy forces have been cleared from PL DISMOUNT to PL SNIPER and are making a final stand along the south bank of the Ohio River north of PL SNIPER. The level of enemy resistance indicates that the enemy remnants have created effective anti-armor kill zones, armed with SAGGER missiles, RPGs, antitank grenades, Molotov cocktails, and sniper fire. The enemy force in OBJ WHITE is reported to have a T-80 and 2 BMPs in support of the dismounted effort.

The most probable and most dangerous course of action is for the enemy remnants to courageously attempt to hold their defensive positions. They will attempt to destroy friendly units piecemeal as they move down the bottleneck streets of Brandenburg.

Friendly. TF 3-37 AR attacks OBJ Bridge (Red, White, and Blue), 071300____98, to seize crossing sites on the south bank of the Ohio River to enable follow-on forces to establish a bridge site at ET729065.

Scenario. You are the commander of Delta Team (two tank platoons and one

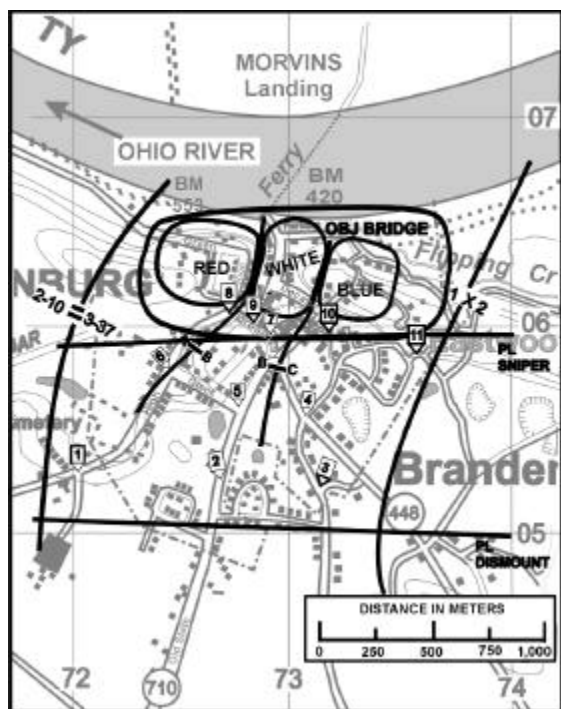
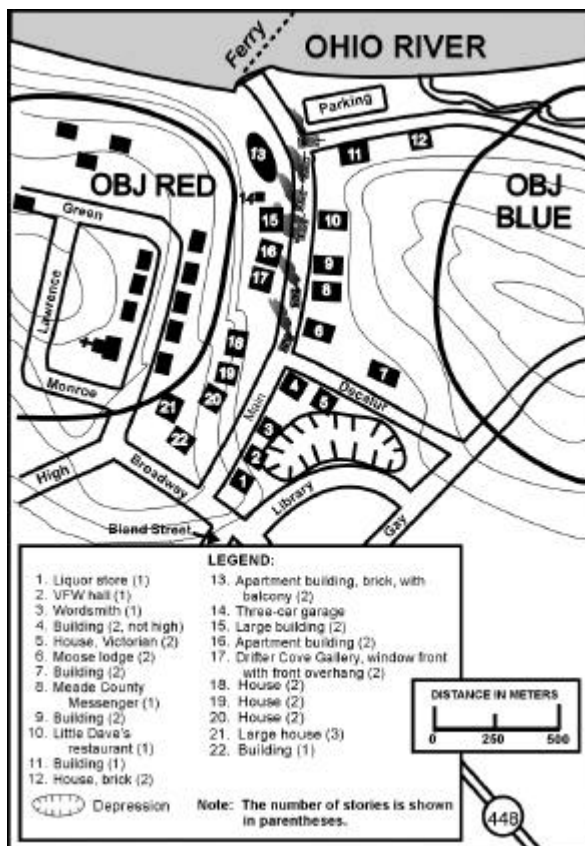
mech platoon with 15 dismounts), TF 3-37. The TF consists of two tank-heavy teams and two mech-heavy teams. You are the TF reserve. The brigade commander wants the TF to seize OBJ BRIDGE in order to support an assault crossing of the Ohio River. TF 2-66 IN has already seized the southern half of Brandenburg (south of PL SNIPER). Alpha Team, TF 3-37, has successfully seized OBJ RED, and Charlie Team, TF 3-37, has successfully seized OBJ BLUE. Both are currently set up in SBF positions oriented north.

In its haste to set up a SBF position, Bravo Team, TF 3-37, attacked its objective in column. A tank platoon was assigned to lead, and the attached infantry platoon was clearing buildings at the southern end of the team's column. While the infantry was clearing the first few buildings on Main Street (1, 2, 20,

21, 22), the team's column of vehicles continued down the street without the support of the infantry platoon. The column proceeded without incident until reaching the northern-most end of the town, where the vehicles were ambushed by antitank fire from the surrounding buildings. The attack destroyed the first two vehicles of the lead tank platoon and the second vehicle of the following mech platoon. Three other vehicles were trapped and eventually destroyed before any dismounted support could assist. Bravo Team recovered the majority of its wounded from Main Street. Bravo 6 reported sighting the following enemy positions: building 13, RPG team; buildings 10 and 16, Sapper teams with small arms fire; building 4, a suspected

sniper; a tank to the east of building 12; a BMP north of building 13. Bravo 6 believes there are other buildings that are occupied by enemy remnants armed with antitank and small arms weapons, but he cannot confirm this.

The TF commander has ordered Bravo Team to retain control of buildings it currently holds and to withdraw all remaining vehicles to CP 7 for consolidation. In addition, he has ordered you to assume the Bravo team mission (seize OBJ White) and has given you priority of artillery and mortar fires as soon as you cross PL Sniper. The TF commander has attached an engineer squad to your company team; the ISG is moving to make linkup at CP 4 in the next five minutes. You also receive reports that some soldiers from Bravo Team are pinned down within the kill zone. Division follow-on forces are rapidly approaching and are expected to reach Brandenburg in one hour. In order for the division to maintain tempo and successfully continue the attack, Brandenburg must be seized and a bridge site established. Your team is currently at CP 5.



THE SOLUTIONS

Author's Solution

FRAGO:

GUIDONS, this is Black 6, FRAGO follows.

Situation: Remnants of an enemy force are defending the town of Brandenburg. Enemy forces have been cleared from PL DISMOUNT to PL SNIPER, and OBJ RED and OBJ BLUE have been seized. The enemy has created an effective antiarmor kill zone in OBJ WHITE and has employed SAGGER missiles, RPGs, anti-tank grenades, Molotov cocktails, and sniper fire. A T-80 and 2 BMPs have been reported on OBJ WHITE. The enemy will attempt to piecemeal friendly units as they move down the bottleneck streets of Brandenburg. Bravo 6 has reported enemy positions in the following buildings: building 13, RPG team; buildings 10 and 16, Sapper teams with small arms; and building 4, a suspected sniper. Other buildings are believed to be occupied by enemy remnants.

Mission: Team D attacks immediately to seize OBJ WHITE to enable follow-on forces to establish a bridge site vic. grid ET729066.

Intent: (Purpose) To seize OBJ WHITE to allow follow-on forces to establish a bridge site vic grid ET729066. (Endstate) OBJ WHITE has been seized and conditions set for follow-on forces to establish the bridge site.

Tasks to subordinate units:

RED: Isolate OBJ WHITE by establishing an SBF position vic grid ET732063 oriented west. Destroy all enemy dismounted forces and armored vehicles (including the T-80) that could bring effective fires into Brandenburg, preventing Blue (mech) from clearing the town. On order, establish a trafficable passage lane from ET730063 to ET730065 (between Decatur Street and "River" Road) for follow-on forces from the division. The engineer squad is attached to assist you in establishing the lane.

BLUE (MECH): The tank platoons will overwatch your initial movement into Brandenburg. Dismount your infantry at the intersection of Broadway and Main Streets. Immediately begin clearing the town. Split your platoon into sections and use your dismounts, overwatched by your vehicles, to clear both sides of Main Street simultaneously. Eliminate the sniper in the building on the southeast corner of the

intersection of Decatur Street and Main Street. Continue to move north along Main Street, eliminating all other enemy resistance. Recover Bravo's wounded. I am attaching a medic vehicle to your platoon, and Black 5 will move with you for added firepower.

WHITE: Provide overwatch of OBJ WHITE by establishing an SBF position vic grid ET727059 oriented northeast into the town. After Blue (mech) has cleared up to Decatur Street, attack north behind the buildings on the west side of Main Street. Destroy the BMP vic grid ET731064 and attempt to find and destroy the other reported BMP.

BLACK 5: Move with Blue (mech), providing them with additional firepower as they clear the buildings along Main Street and as they clear the route. Coordinate with Black 7 for the CASEVAC of Bravo's wounded. Determine if Main Street is a trafficable route for follow-on forces.

FIST: Follow Red and set vic grid ET732063 oriented northwest to observe and adjust artillery and mortar fires to obscure enemy observation of Red's movement.

BLACK 7: On order, lead the M88 forward to recover Bravo's disabled vehicles on Main Street. Request additional M88 support from the Task Force. Supervise the CASEVAC of wounded Bravo soldiers. Request additional medic support from the Task Force as necessary.

SAPPERS: Move with Red and assist in clearing the lane for the follow-on forces.

I will move with Red and maintain command and control of all the moving pieces. I will coordinate with Alpha and Charlie and have them scan for the BMPs and T-80 that were reported close to their positions. It is essential that we maintain situational awareness during the execution of this mission. All guidons, keep me informed of your progress. Communication is our success.

RATIONALE:

The purpose of the company team's mission is to allow follow-on forces to establish a bridge site. The passage of follow-on forces within the allocated 1-hour time constraint hinges on our ability to establish a trafficable lane for the division to pass through. To conserve time, the company team can begin to pass follow-on forces without entirely clearing the town of Brandenburg as long as the main route is clear for the main body of the division. Initially, we must establish a temporary lane to allow passage of the division's lead elements. This provides the company team

with enough time to remove the disabled vehicles from the main avenue of approach (Main Street), which will serve as the passage lane for the division's main body.

To accomplish this mission, the company team should conduct the operation in five phases IAW *FM 90-10-1 (An Infantryman's Guide to Combat in Built-Up Areas)*. After reconnoitering and moving to the objective, the company team isolates the objective, secures a foothold, and clears the built-up area prior to establishing the lane. Isolating the objective involves seizing terrain that dominates the area so that the enemy cannot supply or reinforce its defenders. This step must be accomplished concurrently with securing a foothold, which involves seizing an intermediate objective that provides cover from enemy fire and a place for attacking troops to enter the built-up area. A foothold is normally one or two city blocks. As the company team attacks to secure the foothold, it should be supported by suppressive fires and smoke.

To isolate the objective, I will employ my tank platoons in overwatch roles because of their firepower and their ability to acquire targets with their thermal sights. If my tank platoons are successful, the mechanized platoon's ability to clear the built-up area will be enhanced significantly.

I will use the mechanized platoon to clear the built-up area because of its greater maneuverability in restrictive terrain and its organic relationship with the platoon's dismounted infantry. Task organizing the mechanized assets within the tank platoons would prove to be too time-consuming; it is also doubtful that the tank platoon leader can employ dismounted soldiers with maximum efficiency. Therefore, I decided to keep my platoons pure.

The company team will have to clear the main avenue of approach to pass the majority of the division's assets. Due to the XO's support of Blue, the 1SG will be required to coordinate at the task force level for additional recovery and medic assets, which will assist in expediting the route clearance. Once Brandenburg is cleared and all disabled vehicles have been removed from Main Street, the company team will have created a passage lane capable of handling two-way traffic.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: We purposely reduced the unnecessary verbiage, staying away from a "perfect" schoolhouse solution that would be unrealistic in the heat of battle. Rather, we are providing the readers with a quick, realistic FM fragmentary order from the company team commander to his subordinates.

Reader Solution

(From First Lieutenant Rob Weber, B Co/USAARMC, Fort Knox, Ky.)

FRAGO:

"GUIDONS, this is Black 6, FRAGO follows.

Friendly Situation: Alpha has seized OBJ RED to our immediate West and Charlie has seized OBJ BLUE to our immediate East. Bravo attacked OBJ WHITE to our direct front. At the north end of town, six of their vehicles were destroyed by sniper and RPG fires that came from inside and around the buildings in that vicinity. Bravo has evacuated most of its casualties to CP 7; however, there are still a few dismounts pinned down in the area. Bravo has cleared and still occupies Buildings 1, 2, 20, 21, and 22.

Enemy Situation: Bravo 6 confirms the following enemy locations: RPG team Bldg. 13, SAPPER teams with small arms Bldgs. 10 and 16, suspected sniper Bldg. 4, a T-80 east of Bldg. 12, vicinity grid 732064, and a BMP north of Bldg. 13, vicinity grid 728064. Also expect another BMP somewhere in the town and other enemy occupied buildings, but cannot confirm exact locations. The enemy is armed with SAGGER missiles, antitank grenades, Molotov cocktails, and sniper rifle fire. They will attempt to destroy friendly units piecemeal as they move down the bottleneck streets of Brandenburg.

Mission: Team Delta attacks to seize OBJ WHITE in order to secure the crossing site on the south bank of the Ohio River vicinity grid 728066 and establish a SBF position to enable follow-on forces to establish a bridge site.

Intent: We will clear all buildings on OBJ WHITE and destroy all remaining enemy remnants. The endstate is the seizure of OBJ WHITE and the establishment of a SBF position oriented north across the Ohio River.

Tasks to subordinate units:

BLUE (mech): Detach Bravo section (minus dismounts) to Red (tank) and take Red's Bravo section. Move along Main Street and use your dismounts overwatched by your vehicles to clear Bldgs. 4, 16, 10, and 13 of reported enemy. Be advised, other enemy locations are possible as you move along the street. Collect any of Bravo's casualties that you encounter. Consolidate on the west side of the parking lot oriented NW. Assess whether or not we will be able to clear the vehicles off Main Street and use it as a trafficable route for follow-on forces. BREAK.

RED (tank): Detach Bravo section to Blue (mech) and take Blue's Bravo section. Move along Gay Street and turn west on Decatur Street to pass along the east side of Bldg. 7. Also take the engineer squad and clear a route behind the buildings on the east side of Main Street that can serve as a trafficable passage lane for follow-on forces in case we are unable to clear Main Street for through traffic. Consolidate on the east side of parking lot and orient NE. BREAK

WHITE (tank): Conduct a Passage of Lines with Charlie and quickly move along Gay Street until it intersects "River Road." Attack west along "River Road" and destroy the T-80 vicinity Bldg. 12. Continue your attack west to destroy the BMP vicinity Bldg. 13. You need to execute a timely move, destroy those two vehicles, and set on the south side of the parking lot oriented south. BREAK

Black 5: Follow in support of White and coordinate the passage of lines with Charlie. Keep me informed of your situation and give me warning prior to White's crossing of Main Street so I can lift fires. BREAK

Black 7: Take the trains to CP 9. Send the medic track with Blue to assist in the CASEVAC along Main Street. Coordinate with Charlie 7 for CSS support of White if necessary. On order conduct consolidation and reorganization activities in parking lot vicinity grid 731064. BREAK

FIST: Follow Red and locate in a position of good observation. Trigger artillery and mortar fires to provide smoke to obscure enemy observation of Red's and White's movement. BREAK

I will move with Red and maintain command and control. I will coordinate with Charlie and Alpha and have them scan for the T-80 and BMPs as their reported locations are close to their respective positions. It is essential that we maintain situational awareness, so keep me informed of progress. When White assaults west across the north side of the OBJ, I will instruct Red and Blue to lift and shift fires to prevent fratricide.

Alpha 6, be advised there is a reported BMP north of Bldg. 13 to your NE. You should be able to observe and engage him at this time. BREAK

Charlie 6, be advised there is a reported T-80 east of Bldg. 12 to your NW. You should be able to observe and engage him at this time. OVER.

RATIONALE:

My primary mission is to ensure that the division's follow-on forces can establish the bridge site and continue the attack. Therefore, I must create a trafficable lane

for their passage. In addition, I must also clear OBJ WHITE and CASEVAC Bravo's wounded soldiers. I have task organized my platoons in the following manner:

(Red and Blue, two tanks and two BFVs; White, 4 tanks). I did this in order to provide the element clearing the town with the added firepower of the tanks. In addition, I left the dismounts of the Bradley section that went to Red behind with Blue (mech) for use in clearing the buildings of Brandenburg. White remained tank pure in order to maximize its firepower as it is my primary killing element.

I have used Red to clear a lane behind the buildings on the east side of Main Street to be used in case the disabled vehicles on Main Street cannot be removed prior to the arrival of the division's forces. I have provided Red with the engineer squad to assist them in establishing a lane. I am using the infantry dismounts to clear the buildings in the town of Brandenburg. They are supported with a tank section to provide overwatch and additional firepower and the medic track to assist in the CASEVAC of Bravo's wounded. I have also tasked Blue (mech) with determining whether Main Street can be used as a trafficable route. I have sent White, along with the XO, to conduct a passage of lines with Charlie in the east in order to conduct an attack at the north end of Brandenburg. By attacking east to west, I hope to achieve advantage by hitting the enemy (T-80 and BMPs) from their flanks or rear. I anticipate that these enemy vehicles will be primarily orienting south into the town of Brandenburg. Also, I have attempted to crosstalk with other elements in the task force by informing Alpha and Charlie of the enemy vehicles reported near their locations. If Alpha and Charlie would be able to engage these vehicles, I would have more assets available to accomplish my mission of establishing a lane and clearing Brandenburg. I have used the FIST to provide smoke in order to obscure enemy observation of Red's and White's movement.

I have incorporated a redundancy by providing two alternatives for the passage lane for the division's assets. First, I will attempt to use Main Street as the primary route. However, if Main Street cannot be cleared of enemy resistance or disabled Bravo vehicles cannot be removed, I have provided an alternative route on the eastern side of town. Due to the difficult task organization and the independent maneuver of each platoon, my plan requires a well-trained unit. However, good communication will lead to the commander's ability to maintain command and control and a successful mission.